

9/1/2016

Re: The Eagle Cap Ranger District's Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project

To: Sitka Pence, Kris Stein, [et.al.](#), USFS Eagle Cap Ranger District, Joseph Oregon Center:

This contribution is an update to my initial thoughts concerning the Eagle Cap District's "Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project", which are also reproduced below. It is occasioned by two rather Wild Rumors, to wit:

1] That the "Lapover" Private Landowners, located approximately 16 miles up the Lostine River Road from Highway 82, do not support the Project.

Each Landowner can speak for her/himself, but I'd like to make it perfectly clear that I still support the Project wholeheartedly. In fact, the Project is very similar to the past and existing management practices I have supported and employed on the Lapover Property itself. This involves dealing with:

a] The threat of Hazard Trees. In the 1980's we Landowners of that time actually had the Property spot-logged in early Spring on snow to remove many of these kind of trees and also to reduce the Fuel Load which presents an obvious Fire Hazard. The logging was done by local professionals simply in return for the value of the trees. We Landowners then worked very hard to clean up the slash quickly and burn it safely as Winter approached with adequate moisture in the Forest. The result is hardly noticeable, except as compared to very large areas of the rest of the Lostine Corridor. In many places you cannot even see beyond the roadside anymore.

Likewise, on Lapover the trees keep growing, spreading, and dying such that last Winter one big Spruce Tree, with some thereby disclosed root rot, fell into an older 1940's Log Cabin I've been working on to preserve. Purely by luck it didn't do much damage. We'd removed 2 large dead trees there approximately 8 years prior, but others still remain which look as alive and well as the big Spruce which fell did. So they've generally got to go too. Otherwise there's no sense in thinking that Cabin can be used even as a storage building.

Other similar trees also threaten other structures on the Property to some extent. The Lostine Corridor is also afflicted with many dead Hazard Trees, some of which frequently fall across the Road and can potentially fall into the Camp Grounds. It is not too unusual for traveling vehicles to get blocked by fallen trees and for the people to ask for help from the Landowners in clearing the trees, including from those who own the “Douglas” Property immediately beside Lapover. Pierre Douglas, a professional logger to boot, has cleared many.

b] The threat of the ever increasing Fuel Load and thus Fire. We spot-logged as above also to specifically reduce the Fire Hazard to the Property. In addition we’ve all removed dead trees in various areas and used them for fire wood, or have authorized someone else to take some of these trees for fire wood.

But one Landowner, Maria Belnap, has been especially active in clearing the area around her Cabin and on the Property beyond , especially of the fuel load, and thus putting the rest of us to shame by comparison! The forested area she’s cleared looks a lot like one the “after” photos I just saw at the Forest Service’s Eagle Cap District Center in Joseph, which indicates what they intend for the areas of the Lostine Corridor designated for thinning. With the advanced techniques now used to deal with such areas of high concern, the “after” photo of District's thinning looks to be very obtainable.

2] Therefore I do not put any credibility at all in the Wild Rumor that the Public Safety Project intends to “clear-cut” anything, much less a 100-200 yd. swath all along the whole Corridor Road.

One might even be tempted to think that these Rumors have been spread by those who seem to prefer that the whole Lostine Corridor go up in a Catastrophic Blaze, which this phase of the Safety Project is intended to at least start to prevent also with its Fire Response Staging Area, along with *all* of the Values there it intends to preserve.

Therefore, I submit this update assessment in strong support of the desirability of the Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project, in conjunction with my initial assessment below which remains in effect.

A do-nothing or wait and see “strategy” is not in any way warranted. The threats to the many Values involved there exist right now!

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Lapover Pack Camp/”Ranch”, South Fork, Lostine River Road

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2/27/16 Comment:

The Eagle Cap Ranger District's "Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project"

2/27/2016

Comment:

The proposed "Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project" Plan looks very well designed to manage and decrease the ongoing and increasing hazards to the many values currently and traditionally embodied by the Lostine River Corridor.

I purchased the "Lapover" private property within the Lostine Corridor in late 1973, in some large measure to protect it from the encroachment of unmitigated "civilization", for lack of a better word. I took on and accepted like minded co-owners "in common" to increase the strength of this goal, which I think has proven to be a very successful strategy.

Our only neighbors within about 10 miles are descendants of Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, who is also renowned for sharing these same values and recognized Lapover and the Corridor as a place where they could exist. So sometime around 1944 Justice Douglas bought about 2.2 acres of Lapover from the Hawkins family, who owned it at that time - for the outrageously ununsurous price of \$2.00, thus creating our future neighbors. From that time on, his generational descendants have proceeded in the same manner to protect our and the Corridor's values, which again, the USFS's Plan also seems well designed to protect and maintain.

In fact, for many years on end I've nearly half-lived at Lapover, since 1976, without electricity - except for a generator to occasionally power some tools. And I definitely don't mind the Campgrounds, the traffic on the rather heavily used road running through Lapover, the horses, the fishermen using the Lostine River which also runs through Lapover, the Forest Service's activity and interest, and its Wild and Scenic River management - and even the Big Slides of 1975-6! And of course the Campers themselves and others who also like to use what's here for them, if 'only' for a nice drive to view and experience the Corridor's wonders in this way.

Others occasionally drop by Lapover because they've had a history there too, including even getting married on the property. Even the Winter Snowmobilers are more of a boon to the Corridor than anything else. They function essentially as a Local Patrol of the whole Corridor during the Winter and have not abused even the Private Property in any significant way - nor have the Cross Country Skiers.

In sum, the values embodied by the Lostine River Corridor need to be protected, given the ongoing natural changes and uses. The Plan looks very well designed to this end. So let's do it!

Just one, possibly preventable "catastrophic" fire from the ever increasing fuel load, burning even the soil which is necessary to everything living there, and the Corridor becomes only a sad note in History, and of our natural stewardship of this land of many values - including that of human life itself. Which I really don't think is laying it on too thick!

Many thanks for the Eagle Cap Ranger District's continuing interest and excellent Plan and Process for protecting the Corridor:

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